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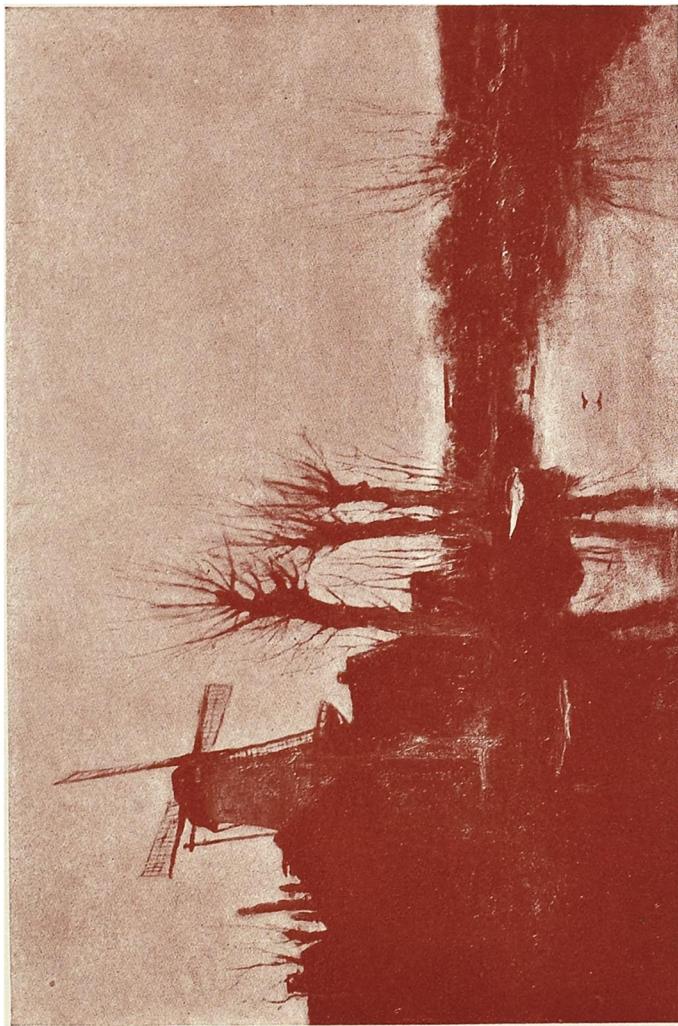
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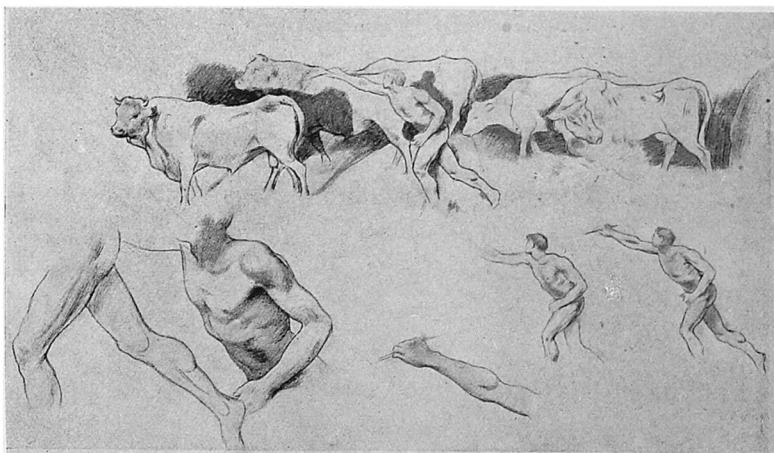
A WINDMILL IN HOLLAND
By Charles P. Gruppe

BRUSH AND PENCIL

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ÉTUDE

By René Ménard

THE ART OF RENÉ MÉNARD, PAINTER

Despite the undisputed pre-eminence of Paris as an art center, despite the fame of its salons and the repute of its schools, much has been said and printed of late of the decadence, the banality, the effeteness, of Parisian art. The strictures have, for the most part, not been ill-advisedly made. Speaking broadly, the glory of the older men of to-day and of the masters who are gone eclipses the renown of the men who furnish the major part of the canvases to the current salons. This is not meant as a sweeping denunciation of the work of to-day—characterizations, like rules, are bound unjustly to work hardships or wrongs—but to express a fact of common observation which many who have at heart the best interests of French art deplore, an ebbing tide of worth and interest which a few of the younger men are doing their best to stem.

The salons for the present year, for instance, were most sharply criticised, and it was frankly avowed, even by many of the most competent French critics, that the saving remnants of the exhibitions were the work of the American contingent of the exhibitors. Meretricious show, *chic*, mere brilliance of color or of technique, daring themes



NU SUR LA MER
By René Ménard

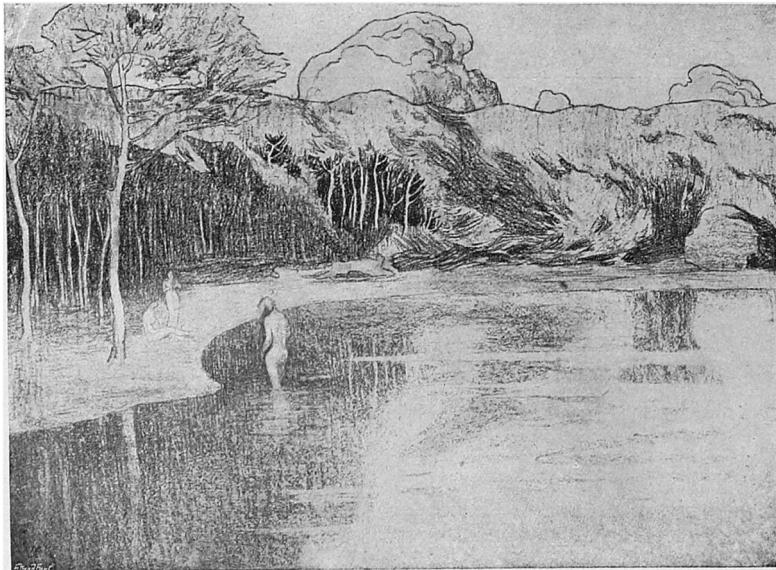
doubtfully handled, reprehensible nakedness instead of the nudity that art makes legitimate, strivings for novelty on the one side, and the marshaling of time-worn themes and treatments on the other—these were flaunted on every hand.

There doubtless never was a salon that had not its generous quota of canvases for the existence of which the most indulgent visitor could find no reason, and there doubtless never will be one. Still there is little excuse in a great art center like Paris for the paucity, one might almost say the almost utter absence, of great works. In point of fact, the men of small ability and meager attainments are bound to predominate and give the prevailing tone to the shows, while the men of originality, power, genius, have a comparatively small representation. These latter, the saving few, come to the front slowly, struggle against odds, champion a new and a better art, and finally win—or lose—their fight, and win—or fail to win—their honors. These are usually men too original and too independent to be bound by tradition, and too serious in their aims and purposes to be carried away by the chimeras that woo or the conventions that hamper the less earnest and gifted workers. One of these men—Charles Cottet—was presented in the pages of BRUSH AND PENCIL a few months ago, and another is the subject of this article—René Ménard.

Among the younger generation of painters who entered upon their careers about 1882 or 1883, and ventured, with varying success, into the arena of the salons, there stands out a group of artists who, despite the lapse of time and the smiles or frowns of fortune, have preserved a bond, if not of common aspirations, at least of affectionate comradeship and close communion. It is to the members of this gifted band that, by common assent, France must look for the reform and the regeneration of its art. The original members of this coterie are Étienne Dinet, Georges Cresson, René Ménard, Lucien Simon, Georges Desvallières, and René Prinet. The work of these men a few years later elicited the interest of Charles Cottet, who entered the circle and has remained within it ever since.

The individual qualities of each of these painters naturally developed more or less slowly. They were fettered, as young artists ever are, by the influence of some favorite master. In the case of one man it was Bastien-Lepage, in that of another it was Roll, in that of a third it was Gustave Moreau. But they were all men of too strong character to remain in shackles, and presently they attained their freedom. The one whose emancipation came most quickly, and who entered most promptly upon the road to success, was René Ménard.

Ménard's emancipation took place fully twenty years ago, and the

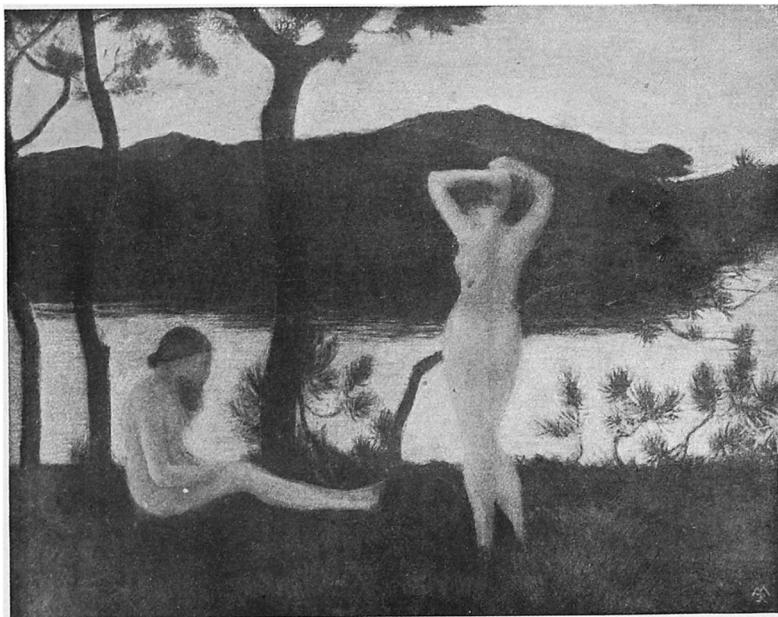


LE BAIN
By René Ménard

lapse of that length of time is sufficient to permit of a comprehensive survey of an artist's work. In his case that work is varied enough and prolific enough to enable one to form an estimate of his tendencies and characteristics. What first impresses one on studying the work of Ménard is that the influence of Bastien-Lepage was of but short duration. The witness of this favorite master was conspicuous in the young artist's first salon picture, but as early as 1884 he had gained his liberty.

Even at this early date he showed a personal decision as regards his selection of subjects and his mode of treatment quite unusual in one of so limited experience; he betrayed his loyalty to the truths of nature, which are so often abused or travestied; he disclosed those powers of analysis that have been conspicuous in all his later work; he gave evidence of his own peculiar bent as regards themes for study; he showed further that fine sense of balance in composition that has since made his pictures remarkable.

Indeed, Ménard has introduced into French art a new and original element, and that element consists in a studious effort after a united whole in composition, in imparting an integral character to his work.



CRÉPUSCULE
By René Ménard

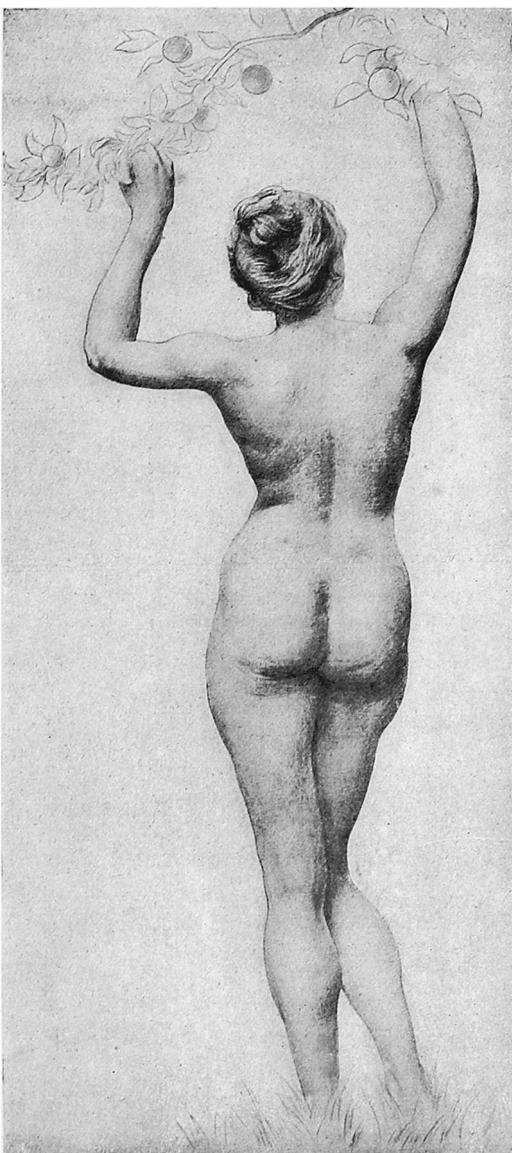


L'AUTOMNE (PAYSAGE CORSE)

By René Ménard

There have been few more careful students of natural phenomena than he, and the elements of a landscape which his memory preserves, and which his imagination enables him to reproduce, are wrought out in such a way that all the features seem necessary one to another. Every individual tree, for example, impresses one as the one tree above all others necessary for the composition, essential for imparting the artist's mood or thought.

Thus Ménard's canvases give an impression of unity and power. He works on principle, and rigid adherence to his principle imparts a wonderful poetic beauty to his canvases. It has been said with truth that style consists in choosing and co-ordinating those things which belong best, most harmoniously, together. With the conviction of the soundness of this principle ever in mind, Ménard has been indefatigable in putting it into actual practice. That he has striven painstakingly, laboriously, for the accomplishment of his aim one cannot doubt, and yet his pictures betray small suggestion of toil and travail. He gives the impression of having unconsciously put into practice the excellent precept which Lecoq de Boisbaudran, the master of Roty, Cazin, Lhermitte, and Fantin, gave to his pupils: "The cultivation of the picturesque memory." The necessity of storing up forms and colors to "incubate" for a time, in order that



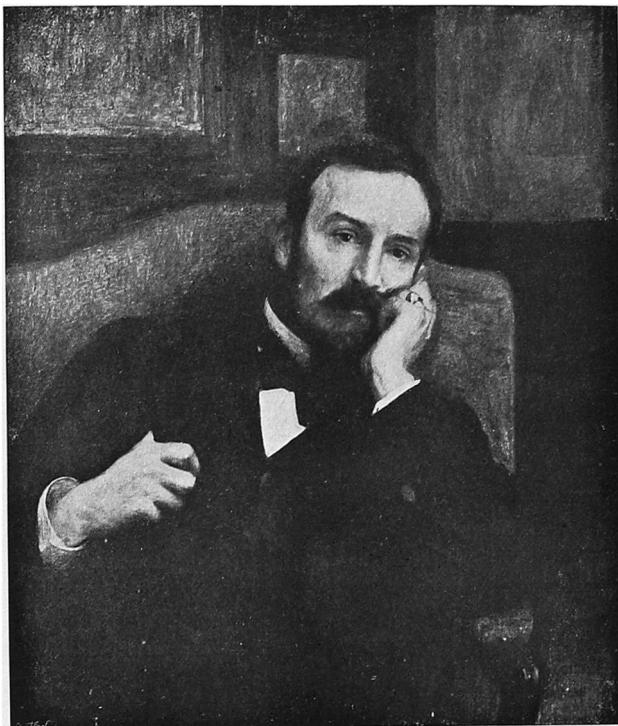
DESSIN POUR L'AUTOMNE
By René Ménard

one day the memory, inspired by imagination, might give them forth in one perfect whole, has ever been the law of his art.

Primarily Ménard is a landscape-painter, though he has had signal success as a portraitist. Many of his canvases take one to an age past, if not forgotten. But it is really small matter for surprise that he should have so often sought his subjects in antiquity, since in his childhood and youth he listened with rapt attention to the songs and sayings of his uncle, the mystic pagan philosopher, Louis Ménard. And, as an appreciative critic has said, how he has made those antique visions with their fresh, pure nudes blossom in the light of our day! For Ménard, as for Corot, to place a nude figure in a landscape means rather to strive after the true re-

lation of flesh tints to their out-of-doors surroundings than to draw a perfect figure. In this he differs from Henner, for whom the quest after a beautiful form is the one end and object of his art.

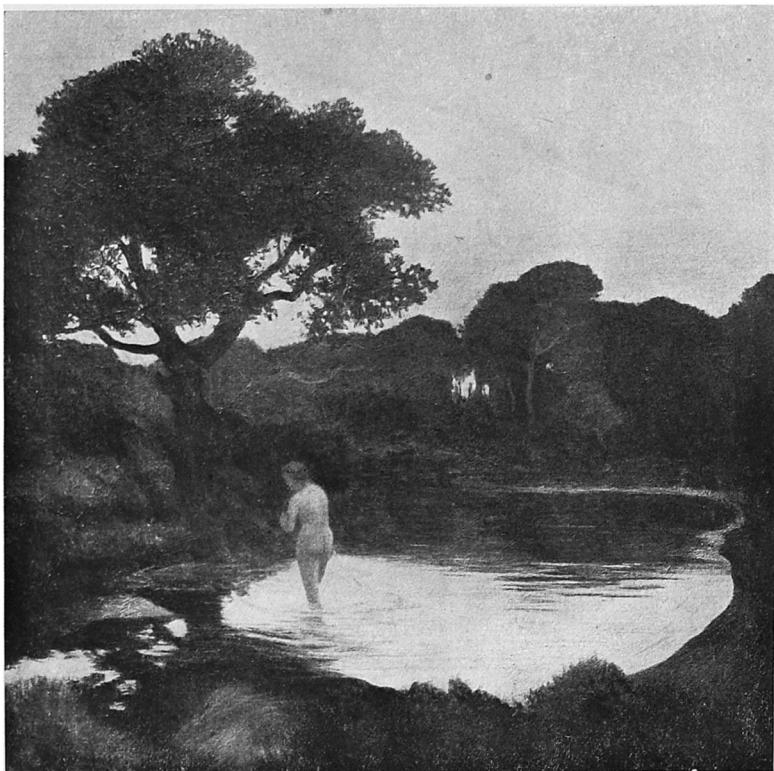
Ménard, however, has too much love for nature, too much reverence for the great landscape-painters of 1830, the contemporaries and



PORTRAIT OF LUCIEN SIMON
By René Ménard

friends of his father, who dreamed in the forest of Fontainebleau and on the plains of Barbizon the dreams which he is still pursuing after them, not to return often to pure landscape, seeking like them to give expression to its spirit. He strives to express the purple glories of the sunset and the fading light of the evening. The marvels of nature, the mutterings of the approaching storm, the fury of uncontrollable winds, appeal to him. Like Hobbema, Ruysdael, and Rousseau he is an ardent lover of beautiful trees—they appear in almost all his canvases, painted by a master hand.

This conjunction of the antique with the modern, this investing a strictly present-day scene with the spirit of bygone days, as did Corot, is a feature of Ménard's work which cannot fail to impress the student of his pictures. It was Corot's practice to add human interest to his majestic landscapes by the introduction of dancing figures that gave



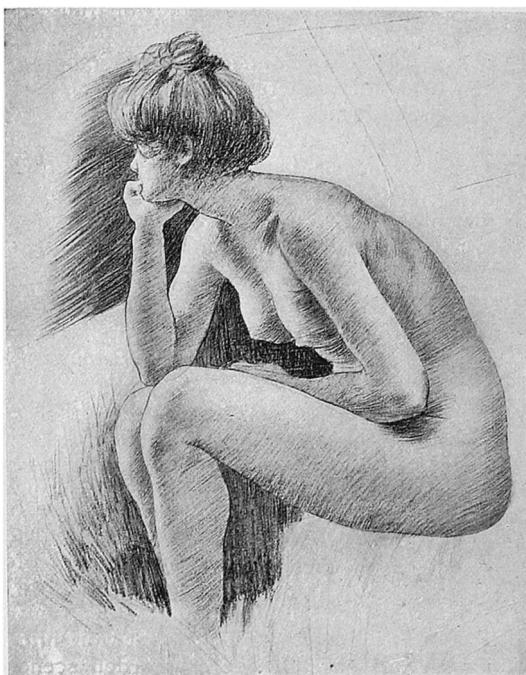
LE SOIR
By René Ménard

them an idyllic character. It has been Ménard's practice, likewise, as is shown by a number of the accompanying reproductions, to accomplish the same end by the introduction of nudes into his compositions. Whether he resort to such accessories or not, his canvases always have that wonderful poetic charm which can only result from the insight of a dreamer who sees, hears, and feels what is denied to the common beholder.

Apart from this studied balance and homogeneous unity of his pictures, two characteristics of Ménard's art should be mentioned. In the first place, he is a master draftsman; and in the second, he is a consummate colorist. Indeed, he is the colorist of the coterie to which he belongs, and as a draftsman he probably has no superior among Parisian painters. His rich palette is due partly to his natural predilection toward the warm tones and partly to an intense study of the declining year in the district with which he is most familiar—Paris and its environs.

There, as has often been pointed out, the transition from summer to winter is not so sharp as in some other latitudes. The autumn is longer, the trees assume their russet garb more slowly, and they retain it much longer. Indeed, that garb is richer and deeper in tone. Hence a picture depicting the autumn dress of Paris and its environments with absolute literalness of tone would be one with a false note of color if judged from the standpoint of those dwelling in remote districts. These colors Ménard knows thoroughly as only one who has studied them as a lover can; he has lived with them and brooded over them till they have literally become a part of his being, and hence of his art. His trees silhouetted in masses against the sky and the peculiar envelope by which they are encompassed are thus absolutely true to fact.

And yet, on his own admission, Ménard rarely paints his pictures direct from the scenes depicted. In other words, what he gives us is his personal impression; he cultivates the "picturesque memory"; he



ÉTUDE
By René Ménard

stores up forms and colors to "incubate"; and then, when the time is ripe, the impression he received days, months, or perhaps years before looms forth upon his canvas, perfect in every detail, and as bright and unsullied as though it were received the moment that it was transferred to canvas. These details of studio practice, though perhaps not unusual, have been a marvel to many of his friends and associates. With him intensity of impression and fixity of memory take the place of the direct studies or transcriptions of many another painter.

Mere prettiness is outside the range of his sympathies—he aims at the beauty that inheres in mass, tone, unity, inherent significance. In his persistent effort to realize his aims he has been successful to a degree that is little less than astonishing. It is small cause for wonder, therefore, that when he had thrown off the influence of Bastien-Lepage, and unhampered by leading strings, had developed his own abilities, he should have centered upon himself the attention of the Parisian art world, and should have attained so enviable a reputation.

Ménard's record is that of a man conscious of his own abilities, and sufficiently earnest and industrious to develop and make the most of them. In the last twenty years he has produced upward of eighty canvases, any one of which does credit to his reputation. His first salon pictures in 1883, "*Le Vieux Pêcheur*," was but a reflex of Bastien-Lepage, and hence is scarcely worthy to be considered among the strongly individual works of the young master. In 1884, however, his "*Les Premiers Astronomes*" and his "*Ruth et Booz*" were works of a different type, showing an absolute transformation from his first efforts; the latter especially have the unity of composition and the nobility of conception that have characterized his subsequent work.

Then followed "*Homère Chantant Devant des Bergers*," in 1885; "*L'Analyse*," a hospital scene that won him honorable mention at the salon, and "*La Liseuse*," a garden scene in which a young girl was the central figure, in 1887; "*Le Printemps*," nude figures in a park among the flowers, in 1889; "*Portrait de Femme*," excellent alike in likeness and execution, in 1890; "*Portrait d'un Homme*," no less remarkable, in 1891; as well as "*Portrait de Delaherche*" and "*Adam et Eve*," this latter an ideal work of extreme beauty. In 1892 appeared three strong canvases, "*Premières Étoiles*," "*Harmonie du Soir*," and "*A l'Aube*"; in 1893, "*Départ du Troupeau*" and "*Les Défricheurs*"; in 1894, "*Portrait de Louis Ménard*," which was bought for the Luxembourg Museum, "*Anse de Kergos*," and "*Derniers Rayons*"; and in 1895, "*Adam et Eve Chassés du Paradis*," "*Le Bain*," "*La Mare*," "*La Ronde*," and "*Portrait de Mme. Bertin*." "*Homère*," chanting to the accompaniment of his lyre, "*Crépuscule*," in which two nude female figures beside a river grace

the foreground of the canvas, and "Lucien Simon," a masterpiece of portraiture, were the principal pictures of 1896.

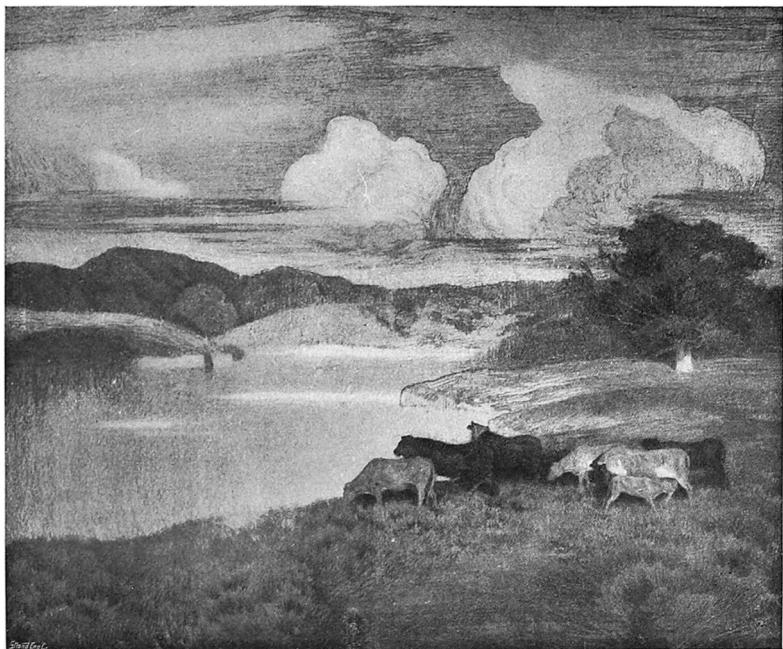
The following years were no less prolific of good works—"Portrait de Mme. Ménard Mère," "L'Automne," "Pluie et Soleil," "Mt. Blanc," "Jugement de Pâris," "Le Soir," "Tombée de la Nuit," "Avant le Bain," "Harmonie du Soir," "Lever de Lune sur la Mer," "Première Étoile," "Marine," "Terre Antique," "Le Troupeau" (likewise bought for the Luxembourg Museum), "Femme Nue," "L'Automne," "Aigues-Mortes," "La Mare," and many other important pictures. These and many another canvas no less worthy of mention attest the breadth of the artist's sympathies and the scope of his efforts.

Without exception these canvases are worked out with uniformly rigid adherence to principle as regards unity of composition and nice adjustment of color scheme to the subject of the work. The pictures chosen for reproduction in this article give a fair idea of the artist's style and selection of subjects, though of course the black-and-white prints cannot give the faintest suggestion of the magnificent color harmonies produced. Perhaps the two portraits here given may be regarded as Ménard's masterpieces in portraiture, and doubtless the cattle piece in the Luxembourg gallery is the finest canvas of the kind he has yet painted. This painting, showing a broad sweep of country across a little lake to the hills beyond, is in the tones which Ménard has made characteristic of his work. The whole is rich and softly blended, and is eminently worthy of the honor conferred upon it by its place in the Luxembourg.

Canvases of this superb character stand out conspicuous in the Paris salons, and reflect discredit on the mass of jejune stuff that finds its way into the galleries. As said before, it is work of this stamp on which French art must rely for any precedence it may have in the future. The world has much to expect from Ménard, as from his chosen associates. In the prime of life, broad shouldered, robust, full of life and spirits, and not afraid of that greatest element of genius—work—one may reasonably expect that the years to come will add to rather than detract from the glory already won.

ARTHUR ANDERSON JAYNES.





LE TROUPEAU
By René Ménard
In the Luxembourg

THE FAMOUS MASSARANTI COLLECTION

One of the most important art collections ever brought to America is that which bears the name of Massaranti—the Rev. Marcello Massaranti, an aged member of the household of Pope Leo XIII.—which was purchased in its entirety by Henry Walters, of Baltimore, at a cost, it is said, of one million dollars. Just what is comprised in this magnificent aggregation of treasures few even of Mr. Walters's most intimate friends have the slightest comprehension. When the collection arrived in this country speculation was rife, both as to its character and as to the disposal the purchaser meant ultimately to make of it. But Mr. Walters has been reticent, refusing to give definite information about the matter. Various reports were circulated—that the purchaser intended to give the collection to one of the prominent public art museums, that he wished to make it the nucleus of a national gallery, that he purposed to add it to his already remarkable collection in Baltimore, and so forth. After a time, however,

public curiosity abated, and Dame Rumor ceased her gossip. The treasures passed from public notice, and from that day to this an air of mystery has surrounded the famous collection.

Now it is announced that not for at least a year to come will the public have an opportunity to look at this perhaps the most remarkable assemblage of paintings and art objects ever brought to this country. The two hundred and seventy-five cases constituted the cargo of the British steamship *Minterne*, which brought them to New York. Two hundred and fifteen of the cases are stored away on the tenth floor of the Parker Building, at Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street, and the others are in a loft in the four-story building at No. 542 West Fifteenth Street. The steamship was specially chartered for the transportation of the collection, and it is said that a duty of ninety thousand dollars was paid by Mr. Walters on his treasures.



PORTRAIT OF LOUIS MÉNARD
By René Ménard
In the Luxembourg